



High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

Week 1, March 15th and 16th, 2017

Spring Tasks, by Stephen Pedersen

The National Weather Service reminds us that winter is not over—they are calling for a pattern change and chance of showers after the upcoming weekend. But it has sure felt like Spring the last few days. We are in full production mode.

Yesterday we transplanted out a new block here at our home site (most of the planting we have done up to this point has been at our Lewis Road parcel which has sandy soil that dries out much faster). Broccoli, red and green cabbage, romanesco, cauliflower, celery, fennel, and rainbow chard were among the things we planted.

One of the great ironies of this wet winter is that our cover crop has grown poorly in many places here on our heavy clay soils—it's simply been too wet. I've made the joke that we would have been better off planting a rice cover crop, but that is not far from the truth. To compensate for this lack of organic matter, we've brought in a large amount of compost that we'll be spreading over the next few days. As we mow down what cover crops there are, we spread the compost over the top and disc them in together. The microbes in the compost help break the cover crop residue down more quickly.

In addition to doing field prep, my other major project these days is doing a complete overhaul of our 1953 Allis Chalmers "G" cultivating tractor which is currently strewn about my workshop floor in pieces. I had to take it apart in order to fix a problem with the differential and am using the opportunity to replace or upgrade many of its parts. Among the things I'll be replacing are the clutch-plate, throw-out bearing, wiring harness, hydraulic hoses, fuel lines, thermostat and drive belt. I'll also be adding weight to the front end so it steers better and completely redoing the "belly bar" where all of cultivating knives are mounted.

To the back of this "belly-bar" we will be adding European finger weeding assemblies, which is one of the things I am most excited about this season. The cultivating tractor uses knives that do a great job undercutting weeds between rows and on the shoulders of our raised beds, but it still leaves a 4" wide band between plants that we have to cultivate by hand using hoes. These new European units use rubber fingers that are gentle enough to leave our transplants intact, but still take out most of the weeds.

Making repairs and upgrades like these ourselves is part of the economic reality for a small farm like ours—it would simply be too expensive to hire things out every time

something broke down. The large farms around us all have large shops with full-time mechanics and fabricators working for them. I'm not complaining, however. It keeps things interesting for me, and there is a lot of satisfaction in getting to know a piece of equipment that you rely on inside and out.

I hope you are enjoying your spring projects too!

Veggie Notes, by Molly Jacobsen

Always rinse produce before use. Everything should be refrigerated.

You guys--this box looks like spring! The sun has returned, our rain-ravaged landscape is drying out, and your farm share has some of the first tender offerings of spring. **Baby spinach** is always a favorite around here. Use these little leaves in salads or scrambles, or use them as a substitute for lettuce on sandwiches for a nice change-up. I often toss a generous handful of baby spinach into a hot pan of near-finished dishes such as risotto or pasta. Adding them in at the very last minute allows the spinach to wilt without losing all of its water and freshness.

Cilantro is one of my favorite herbs, and I'm excited to try out this **cilantro radish** salsa from Sarah Britton's new cookbook, *Naturally Nourished*. Combine 1 1/2 cups of finely diced **radishes** with 1 1/2 tsp minced red onion, 1/2 cup chopped fresh **cilantro** and 2-3 TBS minced serrano chile. Prepare dressing separately: 3 TBS lime juice, 3 TBS olive oil, 1 TBS maple syrup, 2 pinches salt, whisked. Dress veggies just before serving.

Mei Quin Choi are great in stir-fries or soups. These would be tasty paired up with the **green garlic** and either type of **mushroom** in a light broth with noodles. Add miso and fresh ginger for an Asian-inspired noodle soup, and top with chopped fresh **cilantro**.

Green garlic really is the harbinger of spring, as Chef Cohen says below. These tender young plants are harvested young and sold fresh, unlike their mature, dried garlic head counterparts that you are used to. These babies won't last as long as cured garlic does, so keep them in the refrigerator and use within 5-7 days. The flavor of **green garlic** is milder, fresher and sweeter than mature garlic, and does well in many recipes that call for either garlic or scallions. To prepare, remove the root ends and slice the stalks, using the white and pale green parts and reserving the dark green leaves for stock or to flavor soups. Use them in salads and stir-fries, in place of (or addition to)

In The Box

Baby Spinach (loose)

Cilantro

Mei Quin Choi

Radishes

Green Garlic*

Purple Top/Scarlet Turnips*

Oyster OR Shiitake Mushrooms*

Artichokes OR Mystery*

All produce is certified organic. Green garlic is from Everlasting Gardens. Mushrooms are from Far West Fungi. Turnips are from Heirloom Organics. Artichokes are from Coke Farm. All other vegetables and fruit were grown by High Ground Organics. Note: last minute substitutions may be made.

leeks in soups, or put them in pesto. You can even toss them in oil and grill them!

The mystery item this week is likely to be **artichokes**. Basic preparation of **artichokes** can be as simple as steaming them until tender and serving with olive oil, melted butter or another dipping sauce.

Rounding out your box this week will be **Purple Top** and **Scarlet Turnips** from Heirloom Organic Gardens. I really enjoy roasting turnip wedges that have been tossed in oil and seasoned with salt, nutmeg, and smoked paprika.

Enjoy your veggies!

Chef's Notes, by Andrew Cohen

Green garlic and asparagus are THE harbingers of spring, crop wise, to my mind, and they are both out there right now. **Green garlic** is always a favorite of mine-whether in a potato soup, on a cocque or pizza, or in a braise or scrambled eggs. It also subs in for clove garlic, but it won't bring the heat that clove garlic does. It also is stellar as a savory "jam" for garnishing meats or sandwiches, and will turn a dish of champ (British for mashed potatoes and leeks) into a champion. The website has quite a few recipes with these spring treats if you need some inspiration.

The recipe that employs them this week is for fish that is coated with a mixture of **spinach**, **green garlic**, and **oyster mushrooms**. Although the recipe calls for a cup of mayonnaise, don't panic-it gets divided amongst four, and you might not need all the mayo for the dish. You could also use egg white if you are worried. The technique could be used with other ingredients and on other proteins. You could also add in some miso and change the seasonings-start by nixing the salt- and use the paste to top ¼ to ½ slabs of miso. If you get **shiitake mushrooms**, use them and make the paste with miso, ginger, a little sake and mirin and the cooked spinach. Slather on tofu or shellfish and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Use **cilantro** in this is you wish.

Speaking of **cilantro**, it can lend its flavor to dishes and take you all over the world- think Mexico, the American South West, Thailand, Vietnam, the Middle East, China and elsewhere. **Cilantro** is native to south west Asia through northern Africa. The original name for this herb is coriander, although in the US we use the Mexican name for the plant, and the original French name (though derived from Latin) for the seeds. The seeds were found in a jar with the rest of King Tut's swag, and some were found at a Neolithic site as well. The leaves do not last long, especially once cut, so keep this in mind when using it. If it is a dish you will eat all of right away, use the leaves, otherwise consider using the stems instead, as happens in the Creamy Herb Dressing tendered up this week. The stems freeze really well, the leaves do not. And dried **cilantro** is an exercise in futility when it comes to flavor.

Radishes and **cilantro** are a great combination. Try dipping **radishes** in a little oil, scatter on some salt and cilantro leaves and enjoy. For a party, melt some butter, allow it to start cooling and add some cilantro. Stir together and dip trimmed radishes and place in the refrigerator. Allow to temper 15 minutes before serving. The **cilantro** goes well with the **mei quin**, and you could stir fry it with the **radishes** shaved on a mandolin. The **turnips** would be great caramelized or roasted and drizzled with a little maple syrup and balsamic vinegar.

Spinach Crusted Fish with Green Garlic and Oyster Mushrooms, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

4-6 cups young spinach leaves, cleaned and dried on a kitchen towel	1 cup hand-torn then chopped oyster mushrooms
2 TBS dry white wine such as a verdelho or sauvignon blanc	2-3 green garlic stalks, white part only, split lengthwise then finely sliced
Salt and pepper to taste	1 scant cup mayonnaise
1 TBS fresh squeezed lemon juice	Neutral flavored oil or light flavored olive oil, as needed
4 filets, around 4-6 ounces each and not thicker than ½ inch, of Petrale or Dover sole, or tilapia.	

Heat oven to 450°F. Heat a 10-inch skillet over medium heat. When the skillet is hot, just barely film the skillet with oil. Add the mushrooms and very lightly season with salt. Toss to disperse the salt. Cook, tossing and stirring until the mushrooms give up their liquid and become soft and start to color a little. Add the white wine, tossing to coat the mushrooms, and cook until the liquid is reduced. Transfer to a non-reactive bowl.

Film the pan with oil and add the green garlic. Cook gently until the garlic is completely soft but without any browning. If needed to prevent coloring, add water or wine a little at a time, being sure to cook it all off before adding anymore. When translucent, soft, and fragrant, transfer to the bowl with the mushrooms.

Change the heat to low or medium-low, ensure there is a light film of oil in the pan, then add the spinach all at once, or as much as will fit, adding the rest as the spinach shrinks. Cook gently so the spinach wilts. Use tongs to turn the spinach as it wilts so it all is exposed to heat and does not suddenly give up all its liquid. Season with pepper, toss with the tongs and remove from heat. Continue turning until all the spinach is no longer raw/wilted/just cooked.

Roll the spinach up in a kitchen towel and gently squeeze or blot dry. When dry, place on a cutting board and chop finely. Transfer to bowl with mushrooms and garlic. Mix well.

Switch oven to broil. Put fish filets onto a sturdy sheet pan with sides that has been covered with foil and lightly oiled. Don't crowd the fillets or they will steam rather than cook and get a crust. Put the oven rack about 3-inches from the broiler.

Add the lemon juice to the mayonnaise and whisk in. Add the mayonnaise to the bowl with the vegetables and gently combine so the vegetables are thoroughly coated. Use a spoon or spreader to coat the fish evenly with the spinach mayo mixture as if you are frosting a cake. The mixture should not be more than ¼-inch thick. Keep it even on the fish and on all four fillets so everything cooks evenly.

When the filets are coated, place on the oven rack under the broiler. Cook for 8 minutes, then check. The coating should be a bit bubbly, and golden with plenty of browning. To check if the fish is done, press down gently on the head end with a fingertip-the fish should flake easily and be cooked all the way through. If not, give it another 2 minutes and check again. If, for some reason, the crust is quite brown and the fish is barely cooked, turn off the broiler and crank the oven to 500°, and return the fish. Cook until done, which should be a total of 4-5 minutes more than the original 8 minutes. When done, remove to plates or a decorative platter. Use a spatula long enough to hold the entire fillet or it will break. Serve hot! Serves: 4